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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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## Uncle Wiggily And Peter Piper

Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, was hopping along across a green field. The field was not very green, but was just beginning to show a little green grass and clover, for, as yet, Spring had not fully arrived.

"But still I may find a few green things growing that I can eat or take to Sammie and Susie Littletail, the bunny children," thought Mr. Longears. So on and on he hopped. The sun was shining, it was not very cold, and Uncle Wiggily felt happy because his rheumatism did not pain him.

"And when Summer comes it will not hurt me at all," he said.

The rabbit gentleman was wondering whether or not he would have an adventure that day, when, all at once, he saw, climbing over the fence, a boy dressed in a green suit, wearing a red cap and with blue shoes on his feet.

"Ha! He is a funny looking chap!" thought the bunny uncle. "I think he must be one of Mother Goose's friends. I'll ask him." And he did.

"Oh, how do you do, Uncle Wiggily?" asked the queer boy. "Yes, indeed, I'm one of the many children of Mother Goose, to whom you have been so kind. I'm Peter Piper."

"Are you any relation to Tom-Tom, the Piper's son?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"Yes, I'm his cousin. But I had nothing to do with taking the pig. Tom-Tom did that himself. But, if you please, I have a riddle for you to guess."

"A riddle? Come, that's good! I like riddles. Tell it to me."

Then the queer boy stood up straight and recited this:

"Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.

If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,

Where is the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?"

"Oh, my!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "That's a hard one. Let me see now. 'If Peter Pepper pipped a pick of peckled Pipers—!'"

"Oh, no! You have it wrong," said Peter, smiling. "Try once more. Say it after me: 'Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.'"

Uncle Wiggily tried again:

"Pickled Peter pipped a pep of Piperd pikers—"

"Oh, dear, no! Wrong again!" laughed Peter. "Now, once more. Say the last part first and perhaps it will come easier to you."

So Uncle Wiggily said:

"Where is the pop of pickered Peters picker Piper pepped?"

"I—I'm afraid you can't say it," said Peter, gently.

"I'm afraid so myself," said Uncle Wiggily. "I shan't try again. It makes my tongue all twisted and hurts my funny bone. I give up. What's the answer? Where are the peppers?"



"Here they are!" exclaimed Peter, and from behind his back he held out a peck of pickled peppers. "That's the only kind you can pick this time of year," he went on. "I'm taking them to Mrs. Wibblewobble, the duck lady. She mixes them with corn-meal and fries them."

"I'll go with you," spoke Uncle

Wiggily. "I haven't seen Alice and Lulu and Jimmie Wibblewobble in some time."

So the bunny uncle and Peter Piper picked their way across the field toward the duck lady's house. More than once Uncle Wiggily tried to say the riddle, but his tongue grew more and more twisted until he was walking sideways instead of frontwards. So he gave it up.

He and Peter Piper had not gone very far before Peter's shoe lace came loose and he stooped down behind a big stone to tie it—tie the lace, I mean, not the stone. And while he was doing this along came the bad old fox, who had not bothered Uncle Wiggily in some time.

"Ah, ha!" cried the fox, showing his teeth. "This is the time I have you, Mr. Longears! I was just wondering what I would eat for dinner, but now I know. It shall be you!"

"Me?" asked Uncle Wiggily, curious like and wondering.

"Yes, you. Get ready for dinner! My dinner!" snarled the fox.

Uncle Wiggily thought quickly. He did not want to be a dinner for the fox, so he said:

"Before you eat would you not like to guess a riddle?"

"Yes," said the fox, "I would. What is it?"

"And do you promise not to eat me until you guess it?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"I do," said the fox. "But that will not save you, for I can guess any riddle that ever was," and he fluffed up his tail, proud like and saucy.

"Then guess this," said Uncle Wiggily, and now he had no trouble saying Peter Piper picked the peck of pickled peppers. "Where is the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?" suddenly asked Uncle Wiggily of the fox. The bad animal thought for a second and then he said: "If Peter pickled pecked a pick of pipered pickles. A pick of Petered Pipers——"

"Oh, no!" laughed Uncle Wiggily. "You're a bit twisted. Try again." The fox did so.

"If Papper Peter pecked a pit of piddled poppers——"

"Worse than ever," said the bunny uncle. "I think you will not find it as easy as you thought. Once more, please, and try it a bit slower."

The fox growled, and said:

"A pick of peppered Peters did peckle pickle—— Oh, I can't guess your old riddle!" snarled the fox. "I'm going to eat you anyhow! What do I care about the peckled pickers?" and he made a jump for Uncle Wiggily to grab the bunny uncle.

"Eat him? You going to eat Uncle Wiggily? Oh, no! No, you're not!" cried Peter Piper, jumping out from behind the rock. "Mother Goose doesn't want Uncle Wiggily hurt. Be off with you!"

And with that Peter threw a pickled pepper at the fox. It struck him on the nose, and made him sneeze and turn a somersault, and before he could get straightened out Uncle Wiggily and Peter Piper had run away to the duck house.

So Mrs. Wibblewobble got the pickled peppers; that is, all but the one Peter threw at the fox, and Uncle Wiggily at last learned how to say the hard riddle-verse without tying himself in a knot. And if you can recite it, fast, without wrinkling your nose, you are doing well.